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000000000000000000 The Sleeper

A Story of Escape From Russian Cyranny.

By THERESA C. HOLT.

Anna Nickalaevna after her day's work-she was a schoolteacher in Berlin-climbed the stairs to her garret. The days were short, and the twilight had died away. An exile from Russia for the crime of educating the peasants, she now used her own education as a means to a living in the German capi-

Anna Nickalaevna was an orphan. Her father and mother had died when was a child. She had had a brother, but he had been conscripted for the Japanese war. She had heard that he was killed in battle. A younger sister, Sonia, had disappeared after Anna's flight, supposedly for some political offense, and Anna had not heard from her in years. Whether her sister was in a Siberian prison or dead she did not know. One who had been in the prisons of Siberia had told her that her sister was not there. It was therefore to be supposed that she was dead As one year succeeded another and none of her relatives could send any word of the missing girl Anna at last came to consider her sister dead. She experienced that awful loneliness one feels at being the last of a family.

The exile opened the door of her room and was about to strike a light when she heard some one breathing. She did not give way to fright-first, because she was made of sterner stuff, and, second, the breathing seemed to come from a sleeper. Nevertheless she had always had some expectation of extradition and had kept a revolver in her bureau drawer, resolved to die rather than be dragged back to Russia. Instinctively she pulled the drawer open and grasped the weapon. Then she stood and listened. The breathing was evidently that of one sleeping.

Another would have inferred that some one had come into her room and fallen asleep. But Anna Nickalaevna had been hunted in her own country, had made a long and perilous journey in constant fear of capture from eastern Russia to the border, and ever since she had lived in the expectation of either arrest by Russian agents under a trumped up criminal charge or spirited away by them illegally. As she listened to the breathing she formed plans for action in case the sleeper were an enemy.

But, feeling that the enemy-if such it were-was at a disadvantage and not likely to be easily awakened, she resolved to make some move to find out more about who was in the room. She crept toward the bed, where the sleeper lay. Standing at its foot, she stealthily put out her hand to feel. She drew it away quickly. She felt a man's boot.

Anna thought of every probable or possible occurrence to account for a man sleeping in her room. She did not understand how one could have gained access there. The fraulein who rented rooms would only admit men in case they were of the same family as her women lodgers. As the breathing continued heavily she resolved upon further investigation. Going again to the bed, she put out her hand. One cannot, easily move in a straight line in the dark, and this time she struck the other end, for, extending her hand it rested on a face. She was relieved that there was no beard on it. All fear of danger was now gone,

Going to where she kept her matches, she took the box and, again approaching the bed, stood near the sleeper and struck a light. She started. After all. the sleeper was a woman. One foot with a man's boot on it extended below the skirt-if the tattered garment could be called a skirt-but the sleeper's face was turned away.

The match burned out, and Anna struck another one, bending over to get a different view. A start, a suppressed exclamation, the burning match dropped to the floor, and again all was darkness. Scratching another, she lighted a lamp, and, taking it to the bed, she held it before the face of the sleeper. The first happiness she had known in years was expressed in her own face.

It was Sonia, her lost sister.

But, oh, that tired, hunted look! The cheeks and eyes were sunken, and the body seemed to be only bones and rags. Anna gazed, and despite the gladness in her heart she sighed. But she had been through all this herself and was now strong. Sonia, now that there were no more weary night journeys under the stars, hidings in huts or snowdrifts by day, would be herself again and-the loneliness that was breaking down Anna would be no

Leaving her treasure to sleep on, she opened her larder, put the samovar on the stove and stood ready to furnish food when Sonia should awaken. Then she went back to the bed and feasted on the loved one with hungry

She did not intend to awaken her sister, but she could not help taking be risk of putting her arms about her. Fired and worn as was the fugitive. the fear under which she had so long lived awakened her with a start, but the sight of Anna transfigured it to happiness. Without a word the two were locked in each other's arms. How it all came about could wait.

The story came later, or a brief synopsis of it, over a cozy supper and a rup of hot tea. But it was one of thousands, all alike as to their suffering, but of infinite variety as to letalls. When it was told Anna said: "Sonia, dear, I have saved a thouand marks. Let us go to that country where tyranny does not exist-Amer-

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